

Application Serial No.: 09/731,640
Attorney Docket No.: 0190144

REMARKS

This Amendment and Response is in response to the *Non-Final* Office Action of November 30, 2005, where the Examiner has rejected claims 1-4 and 15-19, and objected to claim 20. By the present amendment, claims 1 and 15 have been amended, and claim 20 has been cancelled. After the present amendment, claims 1-4 and 15-19 are pending in the present application. Allowance of outstanding claims 1-4 and 15-19 in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

A. Rejection of Claims 1, 3, 4, 15, 17 and 18 under 35 USC §102(b)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 3, 4, 15, 17 and 18, under 35 USC §102(b), as being anticipated by Kostrzewski, et al. (SPIE) ("Kostrzewski").

Applicant respectfully disagrees; however, in order to expedite the prosecution of the present application, applicant has amended claim 15 to include all of the limitations of claim 20. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 15, as amended, is now in condition for allowance at least based on the Examiner's statement that claim 20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Further, claims 17 and 18 depend from claim 15, as amended, and should be allowed at least for the same reasons claim 15, as amended, is in condition for allowance.

Applicant has also amended independent claim 1 to include limitations similar to those of claim 20. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1, as amended, should be allowed at least for the same reasons claim 15, as amended, is in condition for allowance.

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Further, claims 3 and 4 depend from claim 1, as amended, and should be allowed at least to the same reasons stated above in conjunction with patentability of claim 1, as amended.

B. Rejection of Claims 2 and 16 under 35 USC §103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claims 2 and 16, under 35 USC §103(a), as being unpatentable over Kostrzewski in view of Nagumo (USPN 4,189,751) ("Nagumo").

Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2 and 16 depend from claims 1 and 15, respectively. Accordingly, claims 2 and 16 should be allowed at least for the same reasons stated above in conjunction with patentability of claims 1 and 15, as amended.

C. Rejection of Claim 19 under 35 USC §103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claim 19, under 35 USC §103(a), as being unpatentable over Kostrzewski.

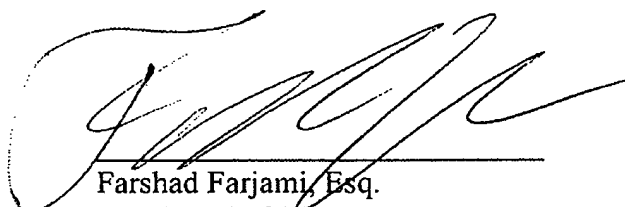
Applicant respectfully submits that claim 19 depends from claim 15, as amended. Accordingly, claim 19 should be allowed at least for the same reasons claim 15, as amended, is in condition for allowance.

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D. Conclusion

Based on the foregoing reasons, an early Notice of Allowance directed to all claims 1-4 and 15-19 pending in the present application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,
FARJAMI & FARJAMI LLP



Farshad Farjami, Esq.
Reg. No. 41,014

FARJAMI & FARJAMI LLP
26522 La Alameda Ave., Suite 360
Mission Viejo, California 92691
Telephone: (949) 282-1000
Facsimile: (949) 282-1002

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Date	<u>1/19/06</u>
Name	<u>Christina Carter</u>
Signature	<u>Christina Carter</u>